

Appl. Ser. No. 09/786,826
Att. Docket No. 02345/146

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the Final Office Action and Advisory Action.

In the Advisory Action, the Examiner states that the case is allowable in light of Applicants' Amendment dated August 14, 2003. Applicants thank the Examiner for this statement. The Advisory Action also states that a Notice of Appeal was filed on August 21, 2003. The Advisory Action also states that an "appeal brief" was not in compliance with 37 C.F.R. 1.121. Applicants respectfully submit that Applicant's last submission was an Amendment in response to a Final Office Action. Applicants apologize for the 'informal look' of the Amendment – but such was due to the blackout situation in Applicants' New York area preventing a more formal response. Applicants submit above (as per the Examiner's suggestion) Applicants' amendments to the claims as submitted in Applicants' Amendment of August 14, 2003.

Claims 16, 18, 19 and 21 to 28 are now pending. Claims 16 and 22 have been amended. Above, any rewritings to claims 16 and 22 are shown by underlining (additions) and square-bracketing (deletions). No new matter has been added.

Claims 15, 17 and 20 have been canceled. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to file a continuation/divisional including those canceled claims.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of this response and amendment.

Applicants thank the Examiner for allowing claims 18, 19, 21 and 23 to 28.

Applicants further thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 16 and 22 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations/features of the base claim(s). In accordance with the Examiner's suggestion, Applicants amended claims 16 and 22 to be independent claims.

Claims 15, 17 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5, 418,881 to Hart Jr. et al. (the "Hart reference"). While Applicants do not believe that the Hart reference anticipates claims 15, 17 and 20, those claims have been canceled from the present application. Applicants reserve the right to file a continuation/divisional containing those claims.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application be allowed, having claims 16, 18, 19 and 21 to 28.

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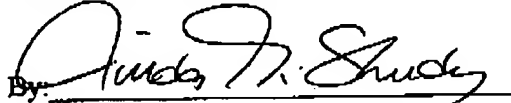
CONCLUSION

In view of the above, it is believed that the rejections of claims 15, 17 and 20, as well as the objections to claims 16 and 22 have been obviated. It is respectfully requested that the rejections be withdrawn, and that the present application issue as early as possible.

Date: March 15, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

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